

# Adjustment Layers

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Adjustment Layers are one of Photoshop's most valuable features. They allow you to adjust images without altering the original. Photoshop provides a large selection of Adjustment Layers. In this chapter you will look at the EXPOSURE layer, the LEVELS layer, the BRIGHTNESS/CONTRAST layer and the BLACK & WHITE layer.

## Exposure layers

One of the most common problems when taking a photo is incorrect exposure. Photos that are over-exposed have too much light in them. Photos that are under-exposed are too dark. An EXPOSURE layer allows you minimize these effects.

### A Loading the Sample Photo

A photo that is under-exposed has been prepared for you and it will need to be adjusted so that the buildings in it can be seen more clearly.

- 1 Load Photoshop or close the current file.
- 2 Display the FILE menu and select OPEN.
- 3 Access the PScs6 SUPPORT FILES, open the CHAPTER 11 folder and load the NELSON'S COLUMN file.
- 4 The photo is too dark to see the buildings clearly.

### B Inserting the Exposure Layer

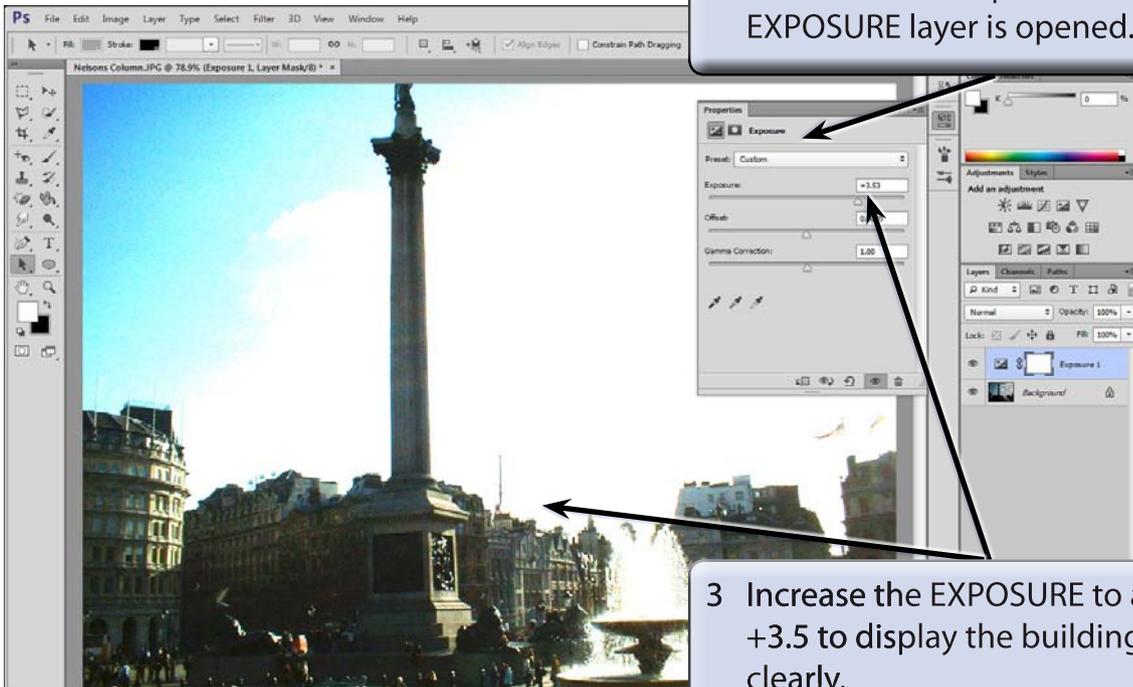
The EXPOSURE LAYER is added on top of the background layer and it will not alter that layer in any way.

1 Expand the ADJUSTMENTS panel in the PANEL GROUP and click on the CREATE A NEW EXPOSURE ADJUSTMENT LAYER icon.



**NOTE:** You can also insert an EXPOSURE LAYER by clicking on the CREATE A NEW FILL OR ADJUSTMENT LAYER icon at the base of the LAYERS panel and selecting EXPOSURE or by displaying the LAYER menu, highlighting NEW ADJUSTMENT LAYER and selecting EXPOSURE.

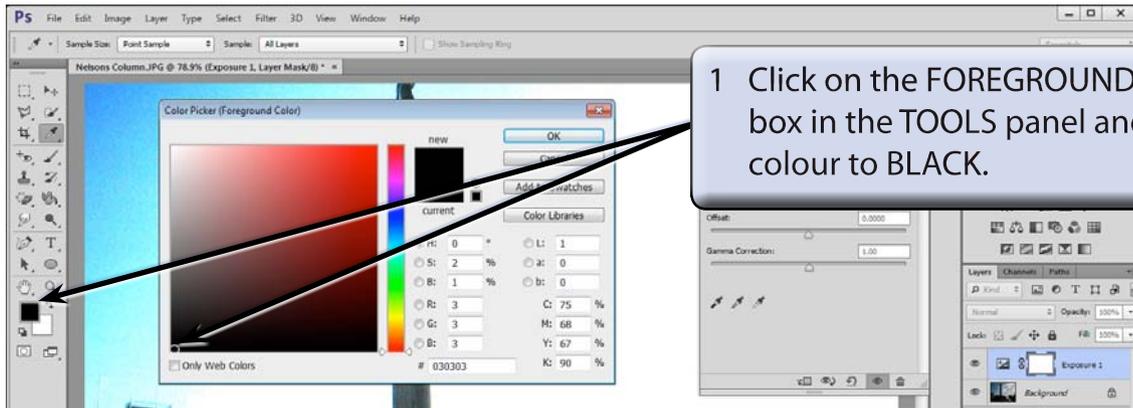
2 The PROPERTIES panel for the EXPOSURE layer is opened.



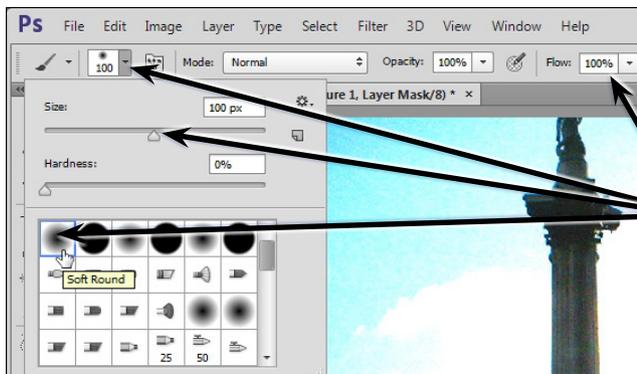
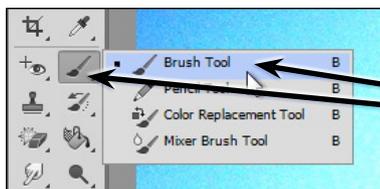
3 Increase the EXPOSURE to about +3.5 to display the buildings more clearly.

## C Displaying Part of the Background Layer

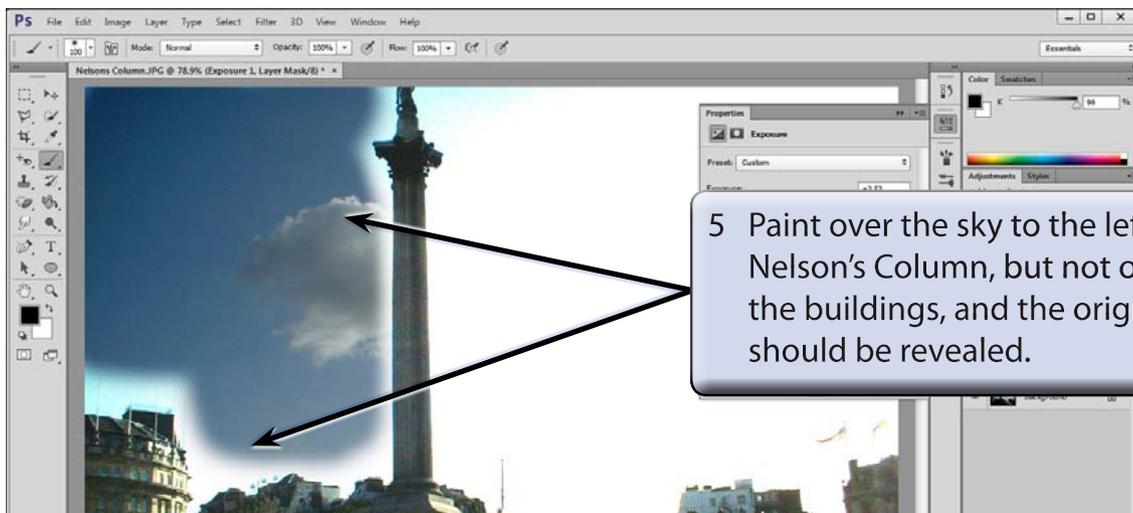
Unfortunately the sky and the fountain are now over exposed and do not look natural. When you create an EXPOSURE layer a MASK is included in the layer. This allows you to paint over parts of the background photo that have better exposure.



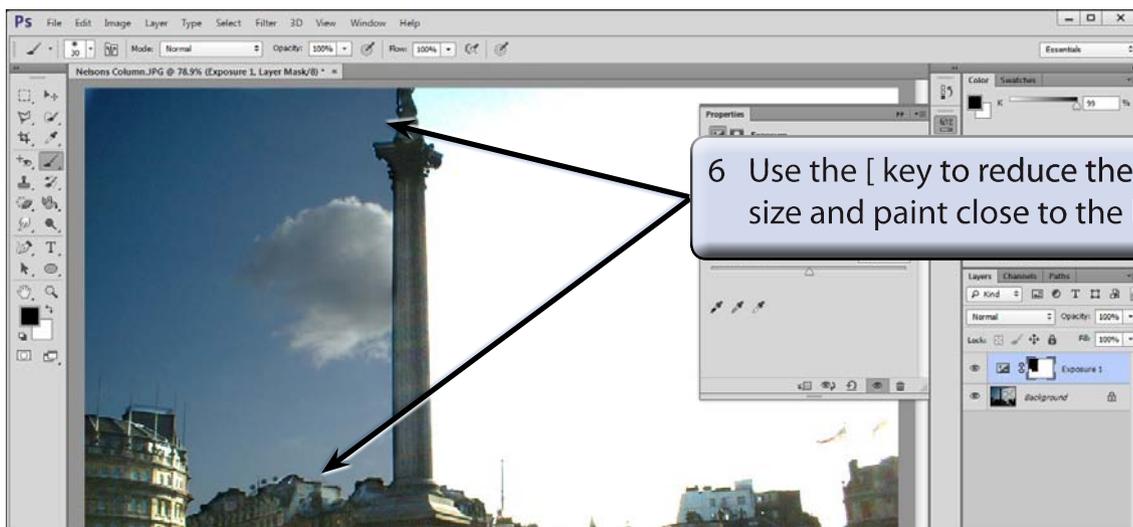
2 Select OK to set the colour.



**NOTE:** A soft brush usually gives good results when painting over a layer mask.

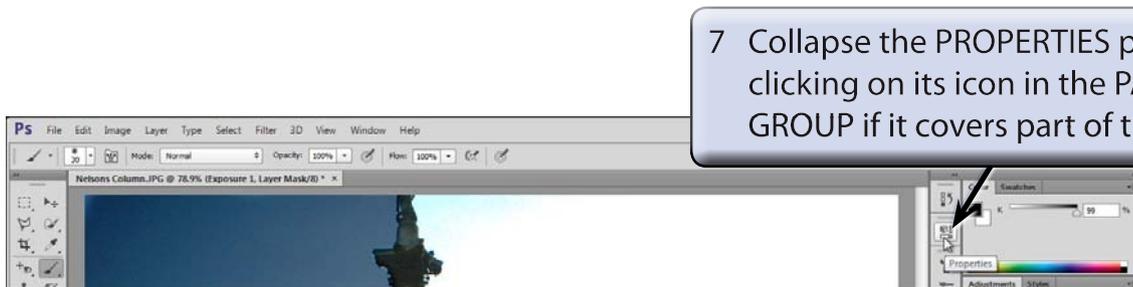


5 Paint over the sky to the left of Nelson's Column, but not over the buildings, and the original sky should be revealed.



6 Use the [ key to reduce the brush size and paint close to the buildings.

**NOTE:** You can use UNDO or STEP BACKWARDS if you make a mistake with the painting.



7 Collapse the PROPERTIES panel by clicking on its icon in the PANEL GROUP if it covers part of the image.